

# The MURC Digest

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

Mississippi Urban Research Center

## CRIME IN MISSISSIPPI: A Trend Line Analysis

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### Overview

This issue of *The MURC Digest* presents an analysis of national, state and local crime statistics by the Jackson State University Mississippi Urban Research Center undertaken to determine if crime in Mississippi has increased since the year 2000. In particular, this report examines crime statistics for the city of Jackson and is organized into the following sections: a discussion of the research methodology used to direct and guide the data collection and analysis aspects of this project, a brief review of the literature regarding the reporting of crime on a national level over the last 15 years, a review of statewide and local crime data and finally, a conclusion and policy implications section summarizing the major findings of this research study. The overarching intent of this research is to provide objective information to policymakers, the media, and everyday citizens that will enable them to be more informed regarding public safety issues.



### Research Methodology

The research methodology used in preparing this report consisted of an examination of crime data collected by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). These data sources are officially authorized by the U.S. Congress to perform crime data collection, analysis, and reporting activities for the country. Due to significant differences in data collection methodology and intent between the FBI Uniform Crime Reports (UCRs) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), these two crime reporting instruments will be discussed in more detail. After collecting and analyzing data from the previously mentioned sources, a simple trend line comparison was used to note directional movement of the data - in most cases either increases or decreases. Caution should be used when analyzing and making comparisons

of the data among and between the various jurisdictions (e.g., national, state, and local) because there are many variables that affect the occurrence and reporting of crime data that could lead to faulty assumptions and conclusions. The years selected for examination were based upon the most recent data available at the time of this writing.

### Establishing a Context

*Crime* - the word itself conjures up many images, but, exactly what is crime and how is it measured? Crime can be defined in many ways. Some common definitions include: “an act committed or omitted in violation of a

law forbidding or commanding it and for which punishment is imposed upon conviction,”<sup>1</sup> “all behaviors and acts for which society provides formally approved punishments”<sup>2</sup> and “an act that violates a political, religious, or moral command considered important in protecting the

interests of the state or the welfare of its citizens or subjects.”<sup>3</sup> What can be summarized from the previous definitions is that a crime is generally viewed as being negatively against the best interests of a given society and necessitates some type of punishment. While crime can be grouped into many categories, this report used the two major categories employed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics for collecting crime data: property crimes (which include burglaries, larceny, motor vehicle theft) and violent crimes (which include murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault).<sup>4</sup>

Just as there are many definitions of crime, there are also many different issues associated with measuring crime and determining what statistics are the most appropriate. In an attempt to simplify these definitions and issues, this research report used statistics gathered and

compiled from the U.S. Department of Justice. This federal agency has two primary units that gather and compile crime-related data: the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). The FBI annually compiles the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) which provide data collected from approximately 17,000 city, county and state law enforcement agencies whose jurisdictions contain approximately 95 percent of the total U.S. population. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) publishes the findings of its annual National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) of approximately 80,000 people. The UCR measures crimes that are reported to law enforcement agencies across the nation; whereas, the NCVS measures crimes that people have experienced, whether or not reported to police. While it is beyond the scope of this research project to fully examine the differences between these two measures, it must be mentioned that these two measures do not always present the same picture of the nation's crime situation over a given time period. In fact, they can sometimes present a very different view of crime rates and trends. The reader is asked to keep this very important point in mind when reviewing the data and narratives presented in this research report. However, taken collectively, these two programs present a very comprehensive view of the crime situation at both the national and local levels.<sup>5</sup>

### Influencing Factors

Just as there are varying factors used in the compilation of the two major national crime measures, there are also many factors that have considerable influence on the reporting and occurrence of crime. Some of these factors include:

- Population density and degree of urbanization (big city growth).
- Variations in the makeup of the population, particularly where youths are most concentrated.
- Stability of the population-residents' tendencies to move around (mobility), commuting patterns, and length of time residing in the area (transient factors).
- Types and condition of transportation and highway systems available.
- Economic conditions, including average income, poverty and job availability.
- Cultural conditions, such as educational, recreational and religious characteristics.

- Family conditions with respect to divorce and family togetherness.
- Climate and weather.
- Effectiveness of law enforcement agencies.
- Policies of other parts of the criminal justice system (prosecutorial, judicial, correctional and probational).
- Attitudes of residents toward crime.<sup>6</sup>

### Examination of Violent and Property Crime Trends: 1973-2005

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics is the central repository for national crime statistics at the federal level. For the purposes of this report, data collected from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) will be used. The years for examination (1973-2005) were selected based upon data and analysis previously compiled and formatted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Crime statistics on the city of Jackson



were available and formatted beginning with the year 1985.

Crime statistics focusing on applicable national, state, and local crime components are presented. A short summary discussion follows each geographic data presentation. Several graphs are included to help the reader better visualize the data presented in this report by showing directional movement in crime rates over several years.

### Summary of National Trends

Based upon statistics reported by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics for the period of 1993-2005, violent crimes in the United States declined by approximately 58 percent and property crimes declined by approximately 48 percent. Also, during this time period, the number of adults in correctional populations (jails) increased, as did direct expenditures for major criminal justice functions (e.g., police, corrections, judicial). Preliminary Annual Uniform Crime Report data covering the time period 2005-2006 show a slight increase in violent crime of 1.3 percent and a slight decrease in property crime of 2.9 percent.<sup>7</sup>

What is important for the reader to gather from the data presented is that nationally, for the time period in question, there were significant decreases in the number and types of major crimes reported.

*The MURC Digest* is published by the Jackson State University Mississippi Urban Research Center, JSU Box 17309, Jackson, Mississippi 39217; Telephone: (601) 979-4100; Fax: (601) 368-2021; Web site: [www.murc.org](http://www.murc.org). The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Center, Jackson State University or the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning.

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Reported Crime in United States -Total

Crime rate per 100,000 population

Year	Population	Violent crime					Property crime			
		Violent Crime rate	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter rate	Forcible rape rate	Robbery rate	Aggravated assault rate	Property crime rate	Burglary rate	Larceny-theft rate	Motor vehicle theft rate
1973	209,851,000	417.4	9.4	24.5	183.1	200.5	3,737.0	1,222.5	2,071.9	442.6
1974	211,392,000	461.1	9.8	26.2	209.3	215.8	4,389.3	1,437.7	2,489.5	462.2
1975	213,124,000	487.8	9.6	26.3	220.8	231.1	4,810.7	1,532.1	2,804.8	473.7
1976	214,659,000	467.8	8.7	26.6	199.3	233.2	4,819.5	1,448.2	2,921.3	450.0
1977	216,332,000	475.9	8.8	29.4	190.7	247.0	4,601.7	1,419.8	2,729.9	451.9
1978	218,059,000	497.8	9.0	31.0	195.8	262.1	4,642.5	1,434.6	2,747.4	460.5
1979	220,099,000	548.9	9.8	34.7	218.4	286.0	5,016.6	1,511.9	2,999.1	505.6
1980	225,349,264	596.6	10.2	36.8	251.1	298.5	5,353.3	1,684.1	3,167.0	502.2
1981	229,146,000	594.3	9.8	36.0	258.7	289.7	5,263.8	1,649.5	3,139.7	474.7
1982	231,534,000	571.1	9.1	34.0	238.9	289.1	5,032.5	1,488.8	3,084.9	458.9
1983	233,981,000	537.7	8.3	33.7	216.5	279.2	4,637.3	1,337.7	2,869.0	430.8
1984	236,158,000	539.2	7.9	35.7	205.4	290.2	4,492.1	1,263.7	2,791.3	437.1
1985	238,740,000	556.6	8.0	37.1	208.5	302.9	4,650.5	1,287.3	2,901.2	462.0
1986	241,077,000	617.7	8.5	37.9	225.1	346.1	4,862.6	1,344.5	3,010.3	507.8
1987	243,400,000	609.7	8.3	37.4	212.7	351.3	4,940.3	1,329.6	3,081.3	529.5
1988	245,807,000	637.2	8.4	37.6	220.9	370.2	5,027.1	1,309.2	3,134.9	582.9
1989	248,239,000	663.1	8.7	38.1	233.0	383.4	5,077.9	1,276.3	3,171.3	630.4
1990	248,709,873	731.8	9.4	41.2	257.0	424.1	5,088.5	1,235.9	3,194.8	657.8
1991	252,177,000	758.1	9.8	42.3	272.7	433.3	5,139.7	1,252.0	3,228.8	658.9
1992	255,082,000	757.5	9.3	42.8	263.6	441.8	4,902.7	1,168.2	3,103.0	631.5
1993	257,908,000	746.8	9.5	41.1	255.9	440.3	4,737.7	1,099.2	3,032.4	606.1
1994	260,341,000	713.6	9.0	39.3	237.7	427.6	4,660.0	1,042.0	3,026.7	591.3
1995	262,755,000	684.6	8.2	37.1	220.9	418.3	4,591.3	987.1	3,043.8	560.4
1996	265,284,000	636.5	7.4	36.3	201.9	390.9	4,450.1	944.8	2,979.7	525.5
1997	267,637,000	610.8	6.8	35.9	186.1	382.0	4,311.9	919.6	2,886.6	505.8
1998	270,296,000	567.5	6.3	34.5	165.4	361.3	4,052.5	863.0	2,729.0	459.8
1999	272,691,000	523.0	5.7	32.8	150.1	334.3	3,743.6	770.4	2,550.7	422.5
2000	281,421,906	506.5	5.5	32.0	145.0	324.0	3,618.3	728.8	2,477.3	412.2
2001	284,796,887	504.4	5.6	31.8	148.5	318.5	3,656.1	740.8	2,484.6	430.6
2002	287,973,924	494.4	5.6	33.1	146.1	309.5	3,630.6	747.0	2,450.7	432.9
2003	290,788,976	475.8	5.7	32.3	142.5	295.4	3,591.2	741.0	2,416.5	433.7
2004	293,656,842	463.2	5.5	32.4	136.7	288.6	3,514.1	730.3	2,362.3	421.5
2005	296,410,404	469.2	5.6	31.7	140.7	291.1	3,429.8	726.7	2,286.3	416.7

**Notes:** When data are unavailable, the cells are blank or the year is not presented. State offense totals are based on data from all reporting agencies and estimates for unreported areas.

**Sources:** FBI, Uniform Crime Reports as prepared by the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data

**Mississippi**

During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, several Mississippi coastal cities reported experiencing a surge in property-related crime.<sup>8</sup> In addition, residents in Mississippi’s capital city have recently experienced a growing series of restaurant and bank robberies.<sup>9</sup>

Law enforcement officials throughout rural Mississippi are seeing a rise in the manufacture and use of crystal meth.<sup>10</sup> Small towns in the Mississippi Delta are seeing a rise in youth gang activity.<sup>11</sup> Real estate developers across the state are building more and more “gated

communities.”<sup>12</sup> Cities of all sizes across the state are debating whether to institute curfews to deal with growing juvenile delinquency problems.<sup>13</sup> Shopping malls are starting to restrict access to certain age populations during business hours.<sup>14</sup> Disgruntled

REPORTED VIOLENT CRIME RATES IN MISSISSIPPI

Year	Population	Violent Crime rate	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter rate	Forcible rape rate	Robbery rate	Aggravated assault rate
1973	2281000	339.1	16.1	17.1	46.8	259.1
1974	2324000	334.9	12.9	17.4	48	256.5
1975	2346000	315.9	13.9	16.5	54.6	230.9
1976	2354000	295.4	12.5	16.3	64.1	202.5
1977	2389000	288.7	14.3	19.6	65.7	189.1
1978	2404000	321.2	12.6	21.8	70.2	216.6
1979	2406000	323.6	12.6	21.7	70.7	218.6
1980	2511491	341.9	14.5	24.6	81	221.7
1981	2530000	304.6	12.6	26	81.4	184.6
1982	2551000	294.6	14	26.5	73	181.1
1983	2587000	280.4	11.2	23.8	63.8	181.6
1984	2598000	282	9.7	27.5	60.5	184.3
1985	2613000	270.9	10.6	26.7	62.6	171.1
1986	2625000	274.1	11.2	25.8	64.6	172.4
1987	2625000	269.8	10.2	29.2	57	173.3
1988	2627000	325.2	8.6	36.2	77.2	203.3
1989	2621000	311.2	9.7	38.8	78.3	184.4
1990	2573216	340.4	12.2	44.1	86.2	198
1991	2592000	389.1	12.8	46.3	116.3	213.7
1992	2614000	411.7	12.2	44.6	124.5	230.4
1993	2643000	433.9	13.5	42.6	139.3	238.4
1994	2669000	493.7	15.3	45.4	162.5	270.5
1995	2697000	502.8	12.9	39.1	130.9	319.9
1996	2716000	488.3	11.1	36.1	134.2	306.8
1997	2731000	469	13.1	39	137	279.9
1998	2752000	410.7	11.4	37.3	123.3	238.6
1999	2769000	349.3	7.7	41.7	111.6	188.2
2000	2844658	360.9	9	35.8	95	221.1
2001	2858029	350.1	9.9	40.1	115.3	184.8
2002	2866733	343.9	9.2	39.3	117.1	178.3
2003	2882594	323.9	9.3	37.4	104.6	172.6
2004	2900768	295.4	7.8	40	86.3	161.2
2005	2921088	278.4	7.3	39.3	82.3	149.4

Rates are the number of reported offenses per 100,000.

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports

employees have gone to work and shot their co-workers at several large Mississippi manufacturing facilities.<sup>15-16</sup> In partial response to these crimes, the Mississippi Legislature recently passed “castle doctrine” legislation allowing citizens greater freedom in using deadly force to protect their lives and property.<sup>17</sup>

Judging from the incidents listed above, it would appear that crime in Mississippi is escalating statewide. Television stations and print media often have as their “lead story” some horrific crime occurring in a place nearby. Are these incidents and others like them indicative of what is really the case in Mississippi as related to crime?

**Crime Trends in Mississippi**

The following data tables, obtained from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics Web site, show historical trends in reported violent and property crimes occurring in Mississippi for the selected time period.

The following summarize information presented on the previous charts for the time period 1973 through 2005:

- The general trend line showed a steady increase in property crimes until 1994 and then showed a steady decline through the year 2005.

## REPORTED PROPERTY CRIME RATES IN MISSISSIPPI

Year	Population	Property crime rate	Burglary rate	Larceny-theft rate	Motor vehicle theft rate
1973	2281000	1587.2	593.8	879.7	113.8
1974	2324000	1914.3	755.7	1034.5	124.1
1975	2346000	2094.8	784.2	1181.3	129.3
1976	2354000	2172.9	811.3	1239.4	122.2
1977	2389000	2299.9	915.6	1239.9	144.4
1978	2404000	2233.7	846.3	1235.6	151.8
1979	2406000	2637	973.7	1496.5	166.8
1980	2511491	3075.2	1179.1	1717.8	178.4
1981	2530000	3232.8	1170.5	1880.9	181.3
1982	2551000	3278	1183.8	1940.6	153.6
1983	2587000	2927.7	1023.5	1762	142.1
1984	2598000	2777.9	980.1	1653.3	144.5
1985	2613000	2994.8	1021.9	1817	156
1986	2625000	3070.9	1075.9	1845	150.1
1987	2625000	3168.8	1201.4	1807	160.5
1988	2627000	3267.6	1281	1820.3	166.4
1989	2621000	3204.1	1145.3	1879.7	179.2
1990	2573216	3528.8	1251.2	2070	207.6
1991	2592000	3831.7	1331.9	2213.5	286.3
1992	2614000	3870.7	1282.8	2251.4	336.5
1993	2643000	3984.4	1285.8	2363.5	335.1
1994	2669000	4343.3	1292.4	2646	405
1995	2697000	4011.7	1131.1	2520.1	360.5
1996	2716000	4034.6	1132.4	2551.5	350.8
1997	2731000	4161.3	1187.4	2632.3	341.6
1998	2752000	3973.3	1144.5	2490	338.7
1999	2769000	3920.5	1051.2	2380.6	488.7
2000	2844658	3643.5	946.3	2452.2	245
2001	2858029	3835.1	1043.4	2460.3	331.5
2002	2866733	3822.6	1032.3	2458.1	332.2
2003	2882594	3707.3	1025.6	2369.6	312.1
2004	2900768	3481.1	953.6	2256	271.6
2005	2921088	3260.1	919.7	2083.9	256.5

Rates are the number of reported offenses per 100,000.

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports

- The number of property crimes spiked in 1994 and the number of violent crimes spiked in 1995.
- The general trend line showed a steady overall decline in total number of violent crimes since 1995.

### Summary of Mississippi Crime Trends

Based upon statistics reported by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, violent crime rates in Mississippi moderated mildly between 1973 and 1989. Violent crime rates increased

significantly between 1990 and 1995. Since 1995, Mississippi's violent crime rates have consistently declined through the year 2005 and are below national crime rates.

Property crime rates in Mississippi were below national property crime rates in 1973, increased consistently since 1973 and reached national levels in 1994. Since then, Mississippi's property crime rates have remained at or near national levels.

Crime statistics for the city of Jackson present a different profile. Violent crimes and property crimes remain above national and state levels, but have shown a consistent decrease in recent years.

Crime trend data specific to the city of Jackson, Miss. are examined below.

Crime Reported by Jackson, Mississippi Police Department

Crime rate per 100,000 population

Violent crime

Property crime

Year	Months reporting	Population coverage	Violent Crime rate	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible rape rate	Robbery rate	Aggravated assault rate	Property crime rate	Burglary rate	Larceny-theft rate	Motor vehicle theft rate
1985	12	210,024	666.1	18.1	55.2	210.5	382.3	5,669.8	1,888.8	3,482.0	299.0
1986	12	210,985	701.5	15.6	54.5	203.3	428.0	5,954.5	2,022.9	3,612.6	319.0
1987	12	208,411	703.4	25.0	53.7	195.3	429.4	7,071.1	2,540.2	4,173.5	357.5
1988	12	206,993	799.1	23.2	73.9	304.8	397.1	7,156.3	2,665.3	4,073.1	417.9
1989	12	201,350	714.2	23.8	89.4	321.3	279.6	8,157.4	2,849.8	4,771.3	536.4
1990	12	196,637	864.0	22.4	93.6	396.7	351.4	10,099.8	3,798.4	5,512.7	788.8
1991	12	198,183	1,203.9	37.3	95.9	662.5	408.2	12,483.4	4,383.8	6,413.3	1,686.3
1992	12	199,964	1,287.2	31.5	105	624.6	526.1	11,788.6	3,746.7	6,011.1	2,030.9
1993	12	198,227	1,402.4	41.9	87.3	759.2	514.1	11,465.6	3,567.1	5,853.4	2,045.1
1994	12	200,272	1,681.7	45.4	103	953.2	579.7	12,295.8	3,680.0	6,143.1	2,472.6
1995	12	195,123	1,366.8	47.1	95.3	752.9	471.5	10,444.2	2,795.7	5,569.8	2,078.7
1996	12	196,619	1,203.3	34.1	106	665.8	397.2	9,205.6	2,504.3	4,955.8	1,745.5
1997	12	197,819	1,081.8	30.8	107	579.8	363.5	9,117.4	2,637.8	4,827.1	1,652.5
1998	12	193,401	1,166.5	31.0	114	635.0	386.2	9,523.2	2,531.0	5,117.3	1,874.9
1999	12	189,930	1,095.1	23.7	130	577.1	363.8	9,473.0	2,534.6	5,108.7	1,829.6
2000	12	184,256	1,039.9	21.2	104	610.0	303.9	9,645.3	2,558.9	5,315.4	1,770.9
2001	12	185,122	1,062.0	27.0	117	564.0	353.3	8,977.9	2,529.7	4,846.5	1,601.6
2002	12	186,012	968.8	26.3	97.8	577.4	267.2	8,518.8	2,353.1	4,660.5	1,505.3
2003	12	181,479	908.1	24.8	98.6	530.1	254.6	8,538.7	2,407.4	4,586.2	1,545.1
2004	12	180,951	703.0	29.3	91.2	374.7	207.8	6,780.8	1,879.0	3,783.3	1,118.5
2005	12	180,417	679.0	21.1	87.6	339.2	231.1	6,655.7	1,739.9	3,857.7	1,058.1

Sources: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports as prepared by the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data

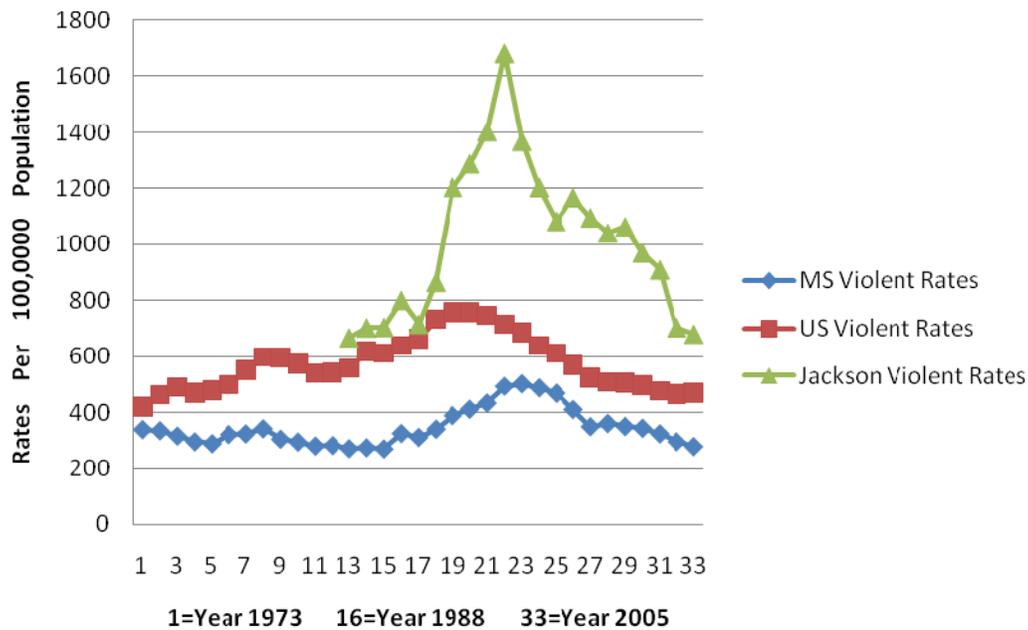
Conclusions and Policy Implications

The central question this report sought to answer was whether crime has increased in Mississippi since the year 2000. While fully recognizing that there are some methodological disparities that exist between the various U.S. Department of Justice databases, the data collected and reviewed provide clear evidence that Mississippi’s crime rate, specifically those crimes categorized as “Violent Crimes” and “Property Crimes,” are below national levels. At the same time, for the city of Jackson, these crimes are above national and state levels, but have shown a decrease in recent years. Recently released statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice’s preliminary Annual Uniform Crime Report for the

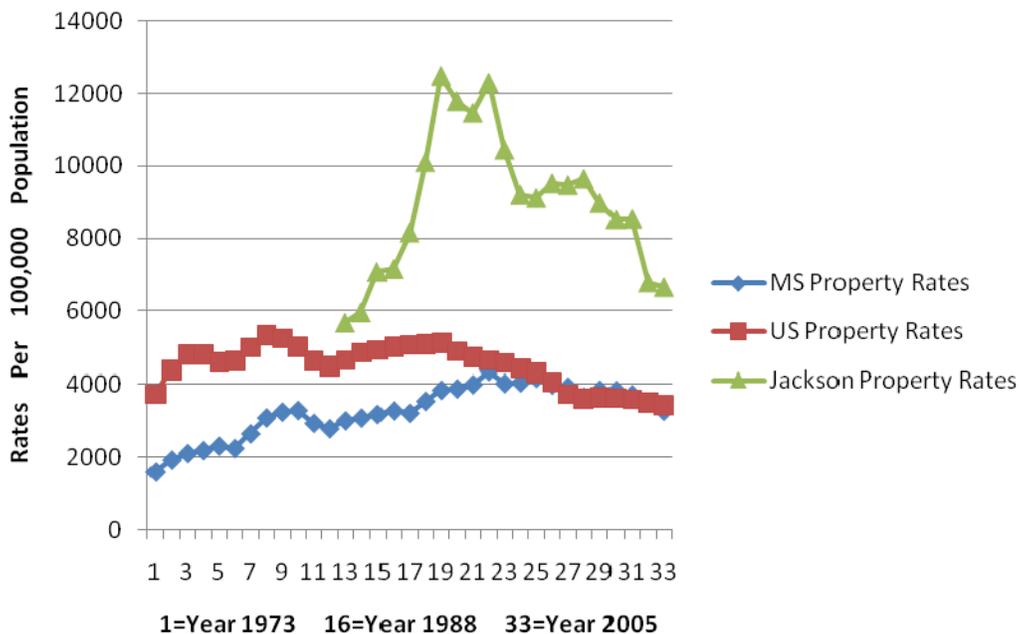
year 2006 indicate a slight increase in violent crimes for that year, while also indicating a continued slight decrease in property crimes.<sup>7</sup> At a bare minimum, these findings appear to indicate that “crime” is a dynamic issue that requires constant monitoring and adaptive approaches.

**However, two variables tended to be related to crime decreases, both on the national and state levels: increase in funds going towards the area of public safety (i.e., police protection and corrections), and increase in the number of inmates being held in correctional facilities (jails).** While there are certainly other factors that can significantly impact crime rates (e.g., changing demographic, economic, and

### COMPARISON OF VIOLENT CRIME RATES



### COMPARISON OF PROPERTY CRIME RATES



cultural/social patterns, to name a few), the two variables referenced above seem to be closely linked to the decreases that occurred. **Another issue that should be raised is crime coding. If crimes are not coded the same across local, state and national**

**agencies, conclusions drawn from comparisons are not valid.** Additional research is needed before any definitive answers can be given. From a policy perspective, these factors merit additional consideration.

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